

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 LAGOS 03837 031540Z

62

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 /119 W  
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R 031456Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3864

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 3837

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, NI

SUBJECT: THE ROAD TO 1976

REF: LAGOS 3808

SUMMARY: FMG APPEARS BE MAKING MORE DETERMINED  
EFFORT REASSURE NIGERIANS THAT CIVILIAN RULE IN 1976 IS  
STILL ON PROGRAM. END SUMMARY

1. FMG ON MAY 2 ISSUED PRESS RELEASE SUMMARIZING  
HIGHLIGHTS OF GOWON BRIEFING FOR NWC REPORTED REFTEL.  
RELEASE, WHICH CARRIED VERBATIM BY SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS,  
COVERED GOWON'S REMARKS ON NEW STATES AND BOUNDARY  
DISPUTES, ERADICATION OF CORRUPTION, CENSUS, AND  
INTENTION OF SETTING UP CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY "TOWARD  
THE END OF MILITARY RULE."

2. BY DESIGN OR COINCIDENCE. MAY 3 PAPERS WHICH  
CARRIED PRESS RELEASE ALSO FEATURED REMARKS BY TWO SENIOR  
MILITARY OFFICERS ON POST-1976 NIGERIAN. IN TV INTERVIEW  
HEADLINED BY TIME AND HERALD, NDA COMMANDANT MAJOR GENERAL  
EKPO URGED THAT CIVILIAN-MILITARY DIARCHY SHOULD BE RULED  
OUT AND COMPLETE CIVILIAN RULE RESTORED AS PROMISED IN  
1976. EKPO ADVOCATED "SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT BASED  
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PAGE 02 LAGOS 03837 031540Z

ON MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM" IN WHICH ARMY ROLE LIMITED TO

NATIONAL SECURITY. IN SEPARATE INTERVIEW, MID-WESTERN STATE GOVERNOR BRIG. OGBEMUDIA REFERRED TO DEBATE TOUCHED OFF BY HIS SPEECH REPORTED IN LAGOS A-65 -APRIL 11) ON FUTURE MILITARY ROLE IN GOVERNMENT. WHILE INSISTING THAT HE HAD NOT ADVOCATED MILITARY NECESSARILY RETAIN POWER AFTER 1976, OGBEMUDIA DID KEEP OPEN POSSIBILITY THAT MILITARY COULD STILL CHANGE THEIR MINDS ABOUT DATE FOR HANDBACK OF POWER. OGBEMUDIA ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT SMC MEMBERSHIP IS UNITED BEHIND HEAD OF STATE AND AT PRESENT TIME REMAINS COMMITTED TO CARRYING OUT PROGRAM HE HAS SET FORTH.

3. COMMENT: THIS IS FIRST TIME FMG PRESS RELEASE ON NWC VISIT TO HEAD OF STATE HAS COVERED SUBSTANCE OF GOWON'S REMARKS. COMBINATION OF THIS INNOVATION AND STATEMENTS BY OTHER SENIOR OFFICERS SUGGESTS FMG MAY BE MAKING DELIBERATE EFFORT TO GET MESSAGE ACROSS TO ALL NIGERIANS THAT PROGRAM FOR TRANSITION IS STILL OFFICIAL POLICY AND THAT MILITARY AT LEAST FOR PRESENT ARE UNITED IN SEEKING TO BRING IT TO FRUITION.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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